

REMARKS

The present amendment is responsive to the final Office Action dated December 28, 2004. A request for a 1-month extension of time is submitted herewith.

Independent claims 1 and 4 have been amended to clarify the nature of a retrieval table and the manner of forming same. These claims now recite "a retrieval table based on the program guide information, the retrieval table comprising a plurality of time slots each having a predetermined length of time independent of the program broadcast times," and "the allocation is performed for each program with reference to a relative start time within a selected time slot in the retrieval table." No new matter has been added by these amendments. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, in ¶¶ 0096-0103 of the instant application. Claims 7-10 were previously cancelled. Claims 11-12 have been added. Therefore, claims 1-6 and 11-12 are presented for consideration.

Claims 1, 3-4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,635,978 ("Alten"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Alten is directed to an electronic program scheduling system "that provides the viewer with a more versatile, readable, and aesthetically pleasing display of program listings as well as promotional information. (Col. 1, lns. 8-12.) The system includes "head end" cable system equipment 10 and a master uplink installation 100. (See FIG. 1.)

The master uplink installation 100 compiles television program schedules and promotional data. (See col. 5, lns. 31-32.) Within the master uplink installation, "[d]ata processor 110 processes the various data including the program schedule

listings stored in database 120, channel map data stored in database 130, and the promotional information stored in database 140. Text fit data processor 115 provides a computer system for editing the program schedule listings descriptions so that they may fit in different size display cells, and is described later." (Col. 5, lns. 32-39.)

The listings database 120 of the master uplink installation 100 "contains the program listings for all cable networks, local stations (including their affiliated network programs), in addition to pay-per-view events." (Col. 5, lns. 39-42.) The master uplink installation 100 generates television program schedule information and promotional material to the cable head-end 10 (see col. 5, lns. 21-23). Furthermore, "Updates and changes to the program schedule information are made at the master uplink facility and then transmitted to the participant cable system." (Col. 6, lns. 58-60.)

Once the program schedule information is configured by the master uplink installation 100 and distributed to the cable head end equipment 10, the information can be distributed to an interactive cable converter box 200. (See col. 14, lns. 5-15.) According to the Office Action, the text fit data processor 115 is a "production means for producing a retrieval table" (Office Action at pg. 3.) Specifically, the Examiner refers to FIG. 10a, which is described in *Alten* as

a flow chart showing the operation of the interactive portion of the text fit system. Data processor 115 extracts only the program title data which includes television program titles as well as movie titles, sporting event titles and titles for other special events. Based on the duration of the program, data processor 115 first analyzes the listings data to determine what grid size listings are needed for each title. Thus, a two hour movie could require four different

edited titles to fit into each of the four different size grid cells (30, 60, 90, 120 minutes). Data processor 115 then determines how much space is required to display the title based on its character length. If the title is to be displayed in the program schedule grid using a proportional font and character to character kerning, the data processor may also account for these factors in determining the space required to display a title. The space determination would then be based on the number of pixels required for the particular combination of characters in the title. The amount of space available for display of a title depends on the size of the grid cell which in turn depends on the duration of the program and the present time.

(Col. 12, lns. 4-25.)

According to *Alten*, the "length of the program determines the size of the cell available for the display of the program title and other information." (Col. 8, lns. 61-63.) The text fit system determines how to generate a program table to display program titles based on the number of characters in the title and the grid cell size. However, while *Alten* addresses the problem of how to fit titles in a program guide, it does not address the underlying problem. According to the instant application, "if a program of a predetermined broadcast time is retrieved on the basis of such a program table, retrieval is time-consuming because the broadcast time of each EPG object is prescribed by the hour, minute and second." (Specification at ¶ 0096.)

One embodiment of the present invention overcomes this problem in the following manner:

First, at step S21, the EPG manager outputs a message to a predetermined EPG object, and requests transfer of the broadcast start time ($H_1M_1S_1$) and broadcast end time ($H_2M_2S_2$) of the program. In

response to this request, the EPG object transfers the stored broadcast start time and broadcast end time to the EPG manager. On receiving the broadcast start time and broadcast end time, the EPG manager sets the relative time and generates a clone EPG object, at step S22.

For example, it is assumed that a program A starts at 19:00 and ends at 20:49, a program B starts at 20:50 and ends at 20:59, a program C starts at 21:00 and ends at 21:29, and a program D starts at 21:30 and ends at 21:59, as shown in the program configuration 141 of Fig. 17. In this case, clone EPG objects are generated by directly copying the EPG objects of the respective programs. Then, the relative time with respect to time slots with a length of one hour is set, as shown in the program configuration 142 of Fig. 17. For example, since the program A is a program from 19:00 to 20:49, the relative start time of the first clone EPG with respect to the first time slot is 00 minutes and the relative end time is 59 minutes. The relative start time of the second clone EPG with respect to the second time slot is 00 minutes and the relative end time is 49 minutes.

As for the clone EPG object of the program B, the relative start time with respect to the second time slot is 50 minutes and the relative end time is 59 minutes. As for the clone EPG object of the program C, the relative start time with respect to the third time slot is 00 minutes and the relative end time is 29 minutes. With respect to the clone EPG object of the program D, the relative start time with respect to the third time slot is 30 minutes and the relative end time is 59 minutes. Fig. 14 shows such an EPG object having the relative start time and the relative end time registered.

Then, the processing goes to step S23, and the EPG manager carries out processing to allocate the clone EPG objects on the retrieval table with reference to the time slots. For example, the first clone EPG object of the program A is allocated to a time slot of 19:00 to 19:59 and the second clone EPG object of the program A is allocated to a time slot of 20:00 to 20:59, as shown in the program configuration 143 of Fig. 17. The clone EPG object of the program B is also allocated to the time slot of 20:00 to 20:59. The clone EPG objects of the programs C and D are allocated to a time slot of 21:00 to 21:59.

(Specification at paragraphs 0097-0100.)

Alten neither discloses nor suggests a retrieval table or a way of creating the retrieval table as claimed in independent claims 1 and 4. It does not produce a retrieval table based on program guide information, nor does it allocate each program among timeslots with reference to a relative start time within a selected timeslot in the retrieval table as required. Furthermore, none of the art of record remedies the deficiencies of *Alten*. For at least this reason, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of independent claims 1 and 4 be withdrawn. Claims 3 and 6 depend from claims 1 and 4, respectively, and contain all of the limitations thereof as well as other limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the prior art of record. Accordingly, applicant submits that these dependent claims are likewise patentable.

Claims 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Alten* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,812,124 ("*Eick*"). Claims 2 and 5 depend from claims 1 and 4, respectively, and contain all of the limitations thereof as well as other limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by

the prior art of record. Accordingly, applicant submits that these dependent claims are likewise patentable.

New claims 11 and 12 were included to address additional features pertaining to the retrieval table and generation of same. As discussed above with respect to independent claims 1 and 4, *Alten* and the other art of record do not address retrieval table generation. Furthermore neither *Alten* nor the other art of record discloses a method or system for identifying program guide objects associated with one or more selected programs, for determining program start times and program end times of each of the selected programs, for setting relative start times of the selected programs in at least one timeslot, for generating clone program guide objects from the program guide objects, and for allocating the clone program guide objects on the retrieval table with reference to the at least one timeslot, as required by the new independent claims. Thus, it is believed that claims 11 and 12 are in condition for allowance.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Office Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

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Docket No.: SONYAK 3.3-033

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Andrew T. Zidel

Registration No.: 45,256
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP
600 South Avenue West
Westfield, New Jersey 07090
(908) 654-5000
Attorney for Applicant

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